

"Wholly, Holey!"

Text: II Corinthians 5:17,

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Mark 2:21, "No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment, ~~else~~ the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the tear is made worse."

Scripture: II Corinthians 5

In the 2nd chapter of Mark, the 21st verse, Jesus gave an object lesson to His disciples, ~~and~~ ^{to} the disciples of John and ~~of~~ ^{to} the ~~pharisees~~ disciples of the pharisees. He told them, "No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the tear is made worse." This is a lesson that we can prove just as I did with a pair of old blue jeans, or that we can prove with our lives. Most of us perhaps have a pet sweater or jacket and when it needs mending we patch it, but there comes a time when it can no longer be patched, but instead must be discarded. (In this scrip. Js is telling us indirectly, that we are "Wholly, holey," or completely and entirely full of holes that need patching.) We stand on the threshold of another new year. Most people look forward to the new year by looking back over their lives, and then determining to do better in the next twelve months. Many of these people will actually draw up a list of resolutions that they will strive to keep in the new year. But as is so often the case, after a matter of weeks or even only days, the same old pattern of life emerges and the person is no better off than he was the previous year. This is what Jesus is saying when He speaks of trying fruitlessly to sew new patches on old garments. He did not go on to say that we should discard the garment and throw it away. But I believe that it is implied in this verse, because He did not go on to elaborate how to mend that garment. But when we read what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in the portion of Scripture we read this morning, I believe that we can see that Paul is giving the solution to the problem of sewing patches on old garments. And in particular he gives the solution in the 17th verse, where he states, "Therefore, if any man ~~ixxi~~ be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Paul was saying that when one is a Christian, he is involved in being or becoming different from others.

The biographers of Louis the 16th of France wrote of him, "He was an amiable and upright man who would doubtless have made a good leader in a time of peace." But unfortunately for him, his ancestors had left him a revolution to reign in. And we are involved in a revolution today. A revolution that threatens us on all sides. It amounts to a revolution of the old and the new clashing in all areas of life. This doesn't mean that all that is new, is acceptable or good, nor does it mean that all that is old is the best for all. It does mean instead, that we look at new and old and make the decisions and judgements that are necessary to change things for the better.

It is custom that breeds revolution. "We cannot try that, because it is our custom to do it this way," someone says. Or, "We have always done it in this manner and we are not about to change," another one may say. If you men will look at the sleeves of your suti coats, you will notice one, two three, maybe four buttons there. Do you know why they are there? The reason is because in monasteries many centuries ago, the old monks had trouble eating their soup. With the loose sleeves in their robes, the sleeves often ended up in the soup, and so they sewed buttons on the sleeves to keep them out of the soup. Another story is that the troops of Napoleon had the sloppiest and dirtiest sleeves in their uniforms because they used the sleeves to wipe their runny noses in cold weather. Napoleon ordered buttons be sewn on the sleeves, the ~~unfi~~ buttons hurt a fellows nose if he tried to wipe it with his sleeves, and thus we have buttons on our sleeves today that serve no useful purpose.

We have all sorts of buttons left over from yesterday. Buttons that we do not need, that have become customs we have outgrown. Most of us have wondered sometimes how streets have gotten in a certain place. Many streets started out as a cattle path through a pasture, which became footpaths for men, and then a wagon ~~path~~ track, and then a road and finally, a city street. We speculate who could have laid out such a crooked meandering street, and we never face the fact that we are following the path of some dumb cow because of

custom. But the real change and the need for change is in the people who follow these age old customs.

But we are reluctant to change because we like to say, "we are set in our ways." But this is untrue, because we are not set in our ways, we are merely unwilling to step out in new directions and to alter our lives.

(Illustration of woman moving to California)

Here was a ~~we~~ woman who was all wrapped up in herself. She was concerned about her loneliness, her lack of friends,. The real problem was that she was unwilling to go out of her way to adjust to her new life. It was only when she found out by accident ~~that~~ what it took to change, that she was able to change her life from one of loneliness to one of happiness.

And this is what Paul was saying to the Corinthians. He was telling them that if any man calls himself a follower of Christ he is a new creation. He is a changed individual. He is a new person. This is also what Jesus was saying when he told Nicodemus that a man had to be born again. He meant that when a person becomes a follower of Him, he is reborn, spiritually. All of the love for the old habits and ways of the world should become things of the past. All of the old traits, the sourness, the bitterness, ~~misery~~ miserableness, fits of anger, temper tantrums, vulgar language and swearing, selfishness, envy, hatred, greed, all of these should be done away with when we become Christians. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Saviour, our lives should become different.

But people say, "Sure, preacher we know that. You make it sound so easy, and it sure looks good, but it sure is hard to do and I find myself slipping back into the same old groove." It is not an easy thing, and I will never try to tell anyone otherwise. I fight a continuous battle in my life to overcome a lot of the pet peeves, and pet habits I have stored up in my lifetime. If anyone tells you it is easy, he is wrong. Even Jesus did not state that it was easy and simple, for he said narrow is the road that leads to everlasting life.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 29, 1974
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. MARILYN STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
JODI MARTE, PATTY BASEHORE - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE: "A CHRISTMAS PASTORALE"
SILENT PRAYER
*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 120 "JOY TO THE WORLD!"
*ASCRIPTION - CHORAL AMEN
*EXHORTATION
*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "O GOD, WHO PUTTEST INTO OUR
HEARTS SUCH DEEP DESIRES THAT WE CANNOT BE AT PEACE
UNTIL WE REST IN THEE! MERCIFULLY GRANT THAT THE
LONGING OF OUR SOULS MAY NOT GO UNSATISFIED BECAUSE
OF ANY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF LIFE THAT MAY SEPERATE US
FROM THEE. OPEN OUR MINDS TO THE COUNSELS OF ETERNAL
WISDOM; BREATHE INTO OUR SOULS THE PEACE WHICH PASSETH
UNDERSTANDING. LET OUR HUNGER AND THIRST BE FOR
RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT WE MAY BE FILLED WITH THE BREAD OF
HEAVEN. O LORD, GIVE US GRACE TO SEEK FIRST THY KINGDOM;
AND WE KNOW THAT THOU WILT ADD UNTO US ALL THINGS NEEDFUL.
AMEN."
*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)
*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN
*PRAISE
*PASTOR: 'O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS.
*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE
*DOXOLOGY No. 551
SCRIPTURE LESSON: II CORINTHIANS 5
HYMN No. 102 "HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING"
*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)
*GLORIA PATRI
*CALL TO PRAYER
*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.
*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.
*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.
*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE
FERING

OFFERTORY "IN HIS HOLY PRESENCE" CLARKE
REQUIEM OBSERVANCE *HYMN No. 418 "FOR ALL THE SAINT
*ANTHEM: "THE MAGI" WILSON SOLO - RICHARD BARTON
SERMON: "WHOLLY, HOLEY!"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER
*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 117 "O THOU JOYFUL"
*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN
ORGAN POSTLUDE: "WELSH NEW YEAR CAROL" ARR. SIMONE

*CONGREGATION STANDING -----
THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY
MRS. BERNICE NICHOLAS IN LOVING MEMORY OF HER "HUSBAND"
SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *ALVIN TAIT, ROBERT
STEWART, JAMES McCLYMONDS AND MIKE NAZARUK.
MR. & MRS. RALPH KILLEAN WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL AT
THE DOOR TODAY.

THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY AND CHRISTMAS EVE. WAS 294.

HOSPITALIZED: MRS. HEGINBOTHAM #526; MRS. GRACE
CHARLETON #627 AND MRS. DOROTHY NICHOLAS 267.

NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY: MRS. PHILIP
SNYDER AND PAULA STEPHENSON.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE DEPARTED ST. PAUL'S
DURING 1974.

MR. THOMAS RAIMONDI	MRS. MAE WEITZEL
MRS. MARGARET WEETER	MRS. HELEN LOUISE CUSTEAD
MR. PAUL HARPER	MRS. ANNA GRACE WILES
MR. CARL F. MILLER	MRS. RONALD ROTH (FRIEND)
MRS. GLADYS E. WINTERS	MRS. MABEL MOULDS (FRIEND)
MRS. BETTY JEAN FILSON	MISS ANNA A. BELL (FRIEND)
	MRS. IDA MAE EBERHART (FRIEND)

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S BOOKS WILL CLOSE AS OF DEC. 31,
1974. ANY MONIES GIVEN AFTER TUESDAY WILL BE CREDITED
TO 1975.

ALL ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD HAVE REPORTS IN FOR YEARBOOK
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FOR 1975 - WE ARE INITIATING A PROGRAM OF READING
THE BIBLE THROUGH IN A YEAR. WE WILL INCLUDE THIS
MATERIAL WITH THE MAILING OF THE NEWSLETTER.

ORDINATION TAPES ARE AVAILABLE AT A COST OF \$2.00
EACH. ANYONE WISHING TO HAVE ONE - PLEASE LET US
KNOW IN THE OFFICE. *JEFF STRAFFER WALKED ON THIS*

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR OPEN: JAN. 26; FEB. 2, 16, 23;
MARCH 2.

Welcome visitors/sign card, book

"Wholly, Holey!"

Mark 2:21, object lesson

"NO MAN SEWETH A PIECE OF NEW CLOTH ON AN OLD GARMENT

ELSE THE NEW PIECE THAT FILLED IT UP TAKETH AWAY FROM THE OLD, AND THE TEAR IS MADE WORSE."

Js speak His, John, Pharisees disciples

" " unsanforized cloth

" say we "Wholly, Holey!"

New yr and resolutions

Scrip Paul wrote Corinthians, 5:17

"THEREFORE, IF A MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW

CREATION; OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL

THINGS ARE BECOME NEW."

If person become Xpian, he change, become different (illust Louis 16 France)

Predecess revolution, we revolu old/new

custom breed revolu

(illust buttons sleeves, cattle trail, streets)

Real change needed peop follow old customs

& ways, we afraid step out new direction

(illust. woman move Calif.)

woman all wrapped self

P say to Cor. Js say to Nico "Be Born again"

all old habits/traits in past, spiritual rebirth

peop say, "we know, U make sound easy preach"

Not easy, I fight battle all time too

(say not easy, narrow way

(illust B. Graham man extremes)

slip, fall many time, Js pick up, this "New CR"

Need call Js, not self-pity,

thus fight Satan & forces

(Illus Alex Gr. & soldier)

Anyone hate, call self Xpian, is not

" refuse give up old habits/haunts not

" no break with past not Xpian

" continue old ways that Unxpian, not Xpian

We may be "WHOLLY, HOLEY" but can become New Creatd

Must come to Js, cannot do otherwise

(Text from Cor.)

(Text from Mark)

TH burden is upon each of us,

"Fellow soldiers who call ourselves Christian,

We must either change our names, or change our

Conduct, & 75 is a good time to start.

"Wholly, Holey!"

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Mark 2:21, "No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the tear is made worse

2nd chap. Mark 21 object lesson

Js gave discs His/Jn/Pharis

(read text, rip jeans)

Js speak unsanforized cloth

But as did with jeans Js speak us as well

Pet sweater/jacket, patch/patch/patch

finally must discard

In scrip Js tell us we "Wholly, Holey!2

we need patch

Threshold new yr

peop draw resol 4 new yr

after wks/days old pattern life, & no better off

This Js say wen fruitless put patch garm

He no say throw away,

but implied in vs

Wen read Cor scrip read wat P wrote ,

we see P give solut prob sew patch old garms

In partic he give solut 17 vs (read text)

P say 1 Bcome Xpian he become diff/changed

(Illus. Louis 16th)

Unfortun 4 him ancestors left him revolu 2 reign

We revolu 2day,

(volu tween old/new

means we look new/old, make decis necess change

things 4 better

It is custom that breeds revolu

"We cannot try that, Bcause our cust do this way."

"we always done it this manner, & not about 2chang

(Illust. buttons on sleeve)

(" paths, crooked streets)

Real change needed in peop who fall age old cust

We reluc ch Bcause we like say, "we set in ways"

This untru, we no set ways, we merely unwill

step out new direc & 2 alter living

(illus. woman move Calif.)

Here woman wrapped in self/concern lonli her choos

will adjust new life

Only wen accident she found what took 2 change

she change life from lonli 2 one of happi

This wat P say Corinthians

2/

He tell them, any man calls self follow Js Xp,
is new creation.

We change individ, new person

This Js say, "Be born again" to Nicodem

We mean person follower Him, he re-born spiritual

All we 4 old habits, haunts should be in past
All old traits/sourness/bitterness/miserableness/
fits anger/temper tantrums/vulgar lang/swearing
obscenely/selfishness/envy/hatred/strife/greed,
all should be done away with wen Bcome Xpians

But peop say, "Sure, preach we know,
you make sound easy/looks good, but hard 2 do."

It not easy, & I never tell anyone otherwise
I fite contin battle my life overcome things of
past, pet habits/peeves etc.

Even Js state not easy,

Narrow is the way leads everlast life
(Illust Man write Billy Graham tell beat up wife etc)
We know it not easy B complete new creations as
P said should and would

Slip & fall many times maybe,
But Js there 2 lift up & help us
This what mean "New Creation"

No longer need wallow self-pity wen things gloomy
& looking down.

Need only call upon Js & He lift out despair
This why should read WORD of G daily
This why should pray constantly daily
From things of G, we gain strength fite Satan
& his forces.

(Illus. Alexander Great & change self or name)

Any1 who hate others calls self Xpian, is not
" " refuse give up old ways & habits not Xpian
" " break with past not Xpian
" " continue, env/miser/vulgar/unforgiv/hateful
etc, things UnXpian not Xpian.

We may be "WHOLLY, HOLEY" but can become new Creator
But must come to Js, cannot do otherwise

"THEREFORE, IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW
CREATION; OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL
THINGS ARE BECOME NEW."

"No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old gar-
ment, else the new piece that filled it up taketh
away from the old, and the tear us made worse."

The burden is upon each of us, "Soldiers, either
change your names, or change your conduct," & 75
good time to start.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.